

106 *THE CASTAWAYS OF
THE FLAG*

months ago. Think of the anguish of all those who were expecting them and watched in vain for their coming!

Truly these relations and friends of theirs were more to be pitied than Captain Gould and his company. At any rate, the forlorn company knew that their dear ones were safe in New Switzerland !

Thus the future loomed heavy with anxiety, and the present was hard.

A new reason for alarm would have been added if all had known what only Captain Gould and the boatswain knew—that the number of turtles was decreasing perceptibly, in consequence of their daily consumption !

" But perhaps/⁵ John Block suggested, " it is because the creatures know of some passage underground through which they can get to the creeks to the east and west; it is a pity we can't follow them."

" Anyhow, Block," Captain Gould replied, " don't say a word to our friends."

" Keep your mind easy, captain. I told you because oae can tell you everything."

" And ought to tell me everything, Block! "

Thereafter the boatswain was obliged
to fish
more assiduously^ for the sea would
never withhold
what the land would soon deny. Of
course, if
•they lived exclusively on fish and
molluscs and